1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie; [44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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585 munity. All others stay under the brush shelter which has been erected at the side of the house, where men are served the common drink of the Haitian peasant, *clairin*, raw rum. The feast, furnished by the bridegroom, includes beef, pork, and many fowls. "We do not eat badly at a wedding!" is the comment of Haitians. At the weddings of more prosperous folk there may be dancing, but no *vodun* dances are danced. "This is not a thing of *vodun*, but of the Church," is the explanation proffered.

The feasting begun, the bridal couple must submit to much speech-making. Long "lessons in morality" are pronounced by grandfathers, godfathers, and elderly male friends; in fact, anyone moved to speak expounds upon "the road to follow" for the good, the worthy life, and many a warning is given with moving examples of the fate of those who disregarded the counsel given them. The food and drinks consumed, the speech-makers silenced, and the dancers tired, the wedding guests begin to take leave, until by sundown many are gone, and soon the young couple find themselves alone.

175 595 567 That plural marriage has existed in Haiti since the time of independence is evident from the available accounts. Little can be learned of slave matings prior to 1804, but it may be assumed that these were in the main temporary and existed at the will of the masters; and while the practice of polygyny among the slaves must have been difficult, if only because of the greater proportion of males, the African pattern seems to have had enough vitality to bring about the re-establishment of the institution as soon as slavery was abolished. Thus, writing in 1830, Makenzie notes a man "not inaptly named 'Taureau'" who "though his means were small, and his cottage still smaller . . . had a harem of no less than six wives."[9]

175 595 St. John, some fifty years later, also remarks on the fact that

> "In the interior, a well-to-do black lives openly with several women as wives, and I have seen the patriarch

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all around in which his younger wives lived, as they could not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest." [10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'" [12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mirebalais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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595 533 of it women who share the same mate meet in the market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

58 595 684 Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs between young people which result in conception, it is essential in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt [1754] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of [848] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

595 593 Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that [454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

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595 593 671 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy introduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people. If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes periodic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists [848] of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and includes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

582 671 858 851 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the children born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods re-
ported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed.
The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal"
wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "nat-
ural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" off-
spring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property.
They must either be provided for by their father before his
death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has
inherited from their common father and feels a moral obliga-
tion toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are
colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical
encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by
mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the
children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks
allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmos-
phere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of
those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer
their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children,
but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than
the phrase: "This is natural."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass.

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered.

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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soon after the death of one for whom he had deep affection, the matter is entirely one which concerns his own feelings. If a woman who cannot afford proper mourning clothes remarries in the Church before she has discharged the obligation to wear mourning for her dead husband, gossip will be heard, but, on the other hand, a woman who has been legally married, and who therefore may not remarry for a year after her husband's death, may be taken as *placée* by another before that period has elapsed. In this case, however, she must wear full mourning and otherwise observe all the necessary rites before the other man with safety may seek the approval of the Church for the union.

Though children who have lived until about twelve years of age and have been baptized are given a *dernière prière* and must not be forgotten when sacrifices are made to the family dead, there is but little mourning for them. *"'Ti moun pas gagné deuilles* — Children do not merit the wearing of mourning," it is said, and they are called *"'ti z'anges* — little angels" — for they are too young to have sinned. "It is only when one makes love that the important sins begin." Therefore, if a young person dies, not only do his parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters not follow his coffin to the grave, but they do not mourn for him. Only those younger brothers and sisters who were of his age — twelve or thirteen years old — wear semi-mourning.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 182 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

178 182 595 158 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his maledictions and threats of eternal damnation — in Mirebalais, at least, often in Créole, a language which the peasant can understand — against those of his flock, the vast majority

178 182 771 158

[191]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

[5] Mackenzie, ii, 124.
[6] St. John, 162.
[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 201–2.
[8] Price-Mars (I), 205, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenskoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[9] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[10] Ibid., 211–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[11] Ibid., 216–17.
[12] Mackenzie, i, 38.
[13] St. John, 145–6.
[14] St. John, 145.
[15] Mackenzie, i, 57. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband.

CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 163.
[3] Among the obligations of the peasant mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 34, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition."

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not *vodun* is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i, 45–6.
[3] Ibid., i, 46.
[4] De Vassière, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 156 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 39.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, *passim*.
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–12, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 157, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be

In the early years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2,3,4] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3,4] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

Ik Courlander . 8-6 (1937-1964) 1968 EV3 Hakl EV3

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their [134] tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 427 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§A]

671 595 423 848 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A *carreau* is about three and a third acres.

§A [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

Yo dit'm gainyain largent siré, oh vrai!
Yo *mimé* conplotaille oh lè sou dos moin!
Oh yo *mimé* conplotaille oh lè sou dos moin!
Fai'm payé largent, *Iwé*!
Mandé Bondieu pou' nou wè li, *oui* [Ex. 100]

Disaster descends on my yard!
If I work in the yard there
They say I have hidden money, in truth!
They plot behind my back!
Oh, they plot behind my back!
Make me pay money, *Iwé*!
I ask God to see it.

Another theme that runs deeply through Haitian life is the need for a mother. In a society where placage is normal and where fathers frequently are transient, the mother has been the stabilizing factor in family life. A *plaçée* family might see the father only at certain times of the year. If he is a farmer, it will usually be when he comes to work his gardens; then he will move on to other gardens and possibly to another family elsewhere. The loss of a mother, under these conditions, is felt very deeply. Many Haitian songs, in various moods, emphasize the role of the mother in the house. Some of them are gay, like this one, with an undercurrent of sadness:

Oh *dépis* manman moin fai moin,
M'pas jamais wè manman moin!
Waille waille waille waille!
Waille waille waille waille!
M'pas *conné* manman moin!
Zandolite fai'm!
Mabouya fai'm!
Zandolite fai'm!
Mabouya fai'm! [Ex. 171]

Oh, since my mother made me,
I've never seen my mother!
Waille waille waille waille! *
Waille waille waille waille!
I do not know my mother!
A *zandolite* made me!
A *mabouya* made me!
A *zandolite* made me!
A *mabouya* made me!

The *zandolite* and *mabouya* to which the song refers are small lizards which constantly skitter about on the rocks and in the trees, as though they have no home. The metaphor is clear.

One more song on this subject stresses the importance of having a mother as compared, say, to an unreliable mate:

Ma crié,
Oh qu'in perdi manman moin ma rélé!
Ma rélé,
Oh qu'in perdi manman moin crié!
Qu'in perdi' un garçon moin join' l'eau' ché

* Exclamation.

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41–76)

[1]Note that the houngan and the hajisan are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.
[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.
[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti*.
[4]Account given by Jean Revel Pierre.
[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.
[6]Account given by Vodunko'Sainvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man does [illegible] one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the [illegible] he is about to do it."
[7]The rite of *rafraîchi ate* is conducted periodically for a *maît' ate* after the original *lavé ate* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.
[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 213.
[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic utterances in familiar form.
[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vaudoux Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 77–94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

I have no mother there,
I have no father there,
I have no sister there,
I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Congas* (pp. 95–104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 87.
[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *magic*, or "voodoo" charm.
[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 393.
[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jeggbes, Maypoles, and Kings* (pp. 105–115)

[1]Achkin, *En Haïti*, p. 40.
[2]Masquerades of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic masquerade, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 116–121)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 360.
[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, pp. 81, describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266–296.

[9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126–136*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

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175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits*
565 *blancs,* and *gens de couleur.*[3] Although no precise English term will translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
567 code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
641 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
648 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.

● [595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it
563 was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
175 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis,* freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595]

In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428

Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reëstablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 25, 1807.
6. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

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Another observation must be set

588 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats 162 and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony, 565 the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency 581 of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the propor- 163 tion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners. [848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married 595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçage

3. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, II, 119–120.

spouses,

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595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 582 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the 795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager 582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 178 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 829 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 585 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 595 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 794 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;